

Message Text

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POUCHED TO ALL CONSULATES IN CANADA

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TAGS: MARR, MPOL, CA

SUBJ: CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE

1. SUMMARY: GENERAL DEXTRAZE IN SPEECH TO CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE ASSOCIATIONS, REVIEWED DEVELOPMENT OF CURRENT CANADIAN DEFENSE POLICY AND MENTIONED EXTENSIVE CUTS AND CLOSING OF BASES WHICH WILL HAVE TO OCCUR IF CANADA IS TO INCREASE ITS EFFICIENCY, PURCHASE NEW EQUIPMENT AND INCREASE ITS FORCES FROM 78,000 TO 79,500. WHILE SEEING NO PARTICULAR CHANGE IN THE NAVY, HE MENTIONED THE NEED FOR A NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT BY THE MID-1980'S AND STRONGLY PRESSED FOR A NEW AIRBASE IN THE ARCTIC. THE ARMY WOULD HAVE TO ABSORB MOST CUTS ALTHOUGH THE CANADIAN FORCES ARE ALSO STUDYING PEACEKEEPING ACTIVITIES. CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO NATO WILL REMAIN BASICALLY UNCHANGED. HIS REMARKS HAVE CAUSED RENEWED SKEPTICISM REGARDING THE CREDIBILITY OF CANADIAN FORCES. END SUMMARY.

2. ON 16 JANUARY, CHIEF OF CANADIAN DEFENSE STAFF, GENERAL J.A. DEXTRAZE, ADDRESSED THE CONFERENCE OF DEFENSE ASSOCIATIONS IN OTTAWA AND DISCUSSED LATEST
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DEVELOPMENTS IN CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE. WHILE MOST

OF SPEECH REVIEWED CURRENT STATUS OF DEFENSE FORCES AND PAST EVENTS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED CURRENT POLICIES, HE ALSO MADE SEVERAL INTERESTING COMMENTS ON MILITARY PLANS.

3. FINANCIAL PROSPECTS: GENERAL DEXTRAZE DESCRIBED DEFENSE REVIEW WHICH IS STILL UNDERWAY AND UNDERLINED INSTABILITY CAUSED BY INFLATION AND BUDGETARY RESTRAINT. HE POINTED OUT THAT "THE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE FINANCIAL PICTURE NOW IS MUCH IMPROVED" BUT POINTED OUT THAT WHILE HE HAS BEEN AUTHORIZED TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT, "THE INITIAL OUTLAY OF MONEY REQUIRED BY THE PURCHASE OF A NEW LRPA AND TANK" MUST COME FROM THE NON-CAPITAL PART OF HIS CURRENT BUDGET.

4. THIS MEANS THAT CONSIDERABLE COST CUTTING WILL OCCUR IN OTHER PARTS OF THE DEFENSE BUDGET. ONE OF THE MOST LIKELY TARGETS WILL BE CANADIAN BASES IN CANADA; "I INTEND TO RECOMMEND TO THE MINISTER THAT A NUMBER OF BASES BE EITHER CLOSED OR REDUCED IN SIZE." IF THESE CUTS ARE EFFECTIVE, GENERAL DEXTRAZE HOPES TO BE ABLE TO INCREASE THE TOTAL REGULAR FORCES FROM 78,000 MEN TO PERHAPS 79,500.

5. GENERAL DEXTRAZE THEN DISCUSSED DIFFERENT COMPONENTS OF CANADIAN MILITARY. REFERRING TO THE NAVY, HE SAID HE SAW "NO MAJOR CHANGES" WHILE CANADA IS "DEVELOPING A TWENTY YEAR SHIP REPLACEMENT PROGRAM". THE CANADIAN AIR FORCE WILL KEEP ITS HEADQUARTERS IN WINNIPEG, WILL MAINTAIN ITS PRESENT LEVEL IN AIRTRANSPORT, MAINTAIN AIR TO AIR TRAINING ACTIVITY AND WILL MAINTAIN RADAR SURVEILLANCE AND FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR CAPABILITY. WITH REFERENCE TO THE FIGHTERS, DEXTRAZE MENTIONED SPECIFIC CANADIAN NEEDS FOR SUFFICIENT RANGE, COMBAT MANEUVERABILITY AND WEAPONS PAYLOAD AND SAID THAT "THERE ARE NOW AIRCRAFT CAPABLE OF MEETING THIS REQUIREMENT THAT ARE AVAILABLE NOW, THAT COULD BE BOUGHT OFF THE SHELF, AND FOR WHICH PRODUCTION SHARING ARRANGEMENT COULD BE CONCLUDED.....LOOK AT THE F14, F15, OR THE F16."

6. AT THIS POINT, GENERAL DEXTRAZE STRESSED HIS DESIRE FOR A DISPERAL BASE FOR AIRCRAFT IN THE ARCTIC ABOVE THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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60TH PARALLES" "AS EACH DAY PASSES I SEE AN INCREASING NEED FOR AN ARCTIC BASE, NOT SIMPLY TO SUPPORT THE FIGHTER, BUT PRIMARILY TO OPEN THE NORTH BY PROVIDING BOTH THE INFRA-STRUCTURE TO ATTRACT COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND TO ALLOW THE PHYSICAL PRESENCE ON THE GROUND THROUGH WHICH OUR SOVEREIGNTY MAY BE VISIBLY EXERCISED. I SEE THIS BASE BEING DEVELOPED UNDER A FEDERAL UMBRELLA AND JOINTLY FINANCED AND ADMINISTERED BY ALL FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS WITH ACTIVE NORTHERN INTERESTS. IT WOULD

HAVE TO BE CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING JET POWERED AIRCRAFT YEAR
ROUND AS WELL AS PROVIDING HARBOR FACILITIES..."

7. THE CANADAIN ARMY: THE ARMY WOULD BE MOST AFFECTED BY COST
CUTTING, SINCE "IT COULD BE BETTER BALANCED GEOGRAPHICALLY AND
BECAUSE THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH PEOPLE TO FILL CRITICAL VACANCIES."
HE THEN DISCUSSED VARIOUS HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIOS TRANSFERRING
DIFFERENT BRIGADES OR COMBAT GROUPS FROM ONE LOCATION TO
ANOTHER.

8. NATO: AFTER COMMENTING THAT DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS STAFF
WOULD BE REDUCED BY 10 PERCENT, THE GENERAL TURNED TO NATO WHERE
HE INDICATED CANADA "LIKE OTHER NATO NATIONS" HOPES TO KEEP THE
CF104 OPERATIONAL UNTIL THE EARLY OR MID-1980'S WHILE STUDYING
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. "ULTIMATELY, I
WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY OF THE CF-104,
THE CF-101, AND THE CF-5 REPLACED BY A SINGLE NEW FIGHTER... I
ANTICIPATE IT WILL COST OVER A BILLION DOLLARS." TURNING TO THE
NATO BRIGADE, HE PRAISED THE PREPAREDNESS OF THE TROOPS AND
SAID "...SUFFICIENT TANKS, GUNS, VEHICLES AND WEAPONS WOULD BE
PREPOSITIONED WITH THE BRIGADE TO BRING ITS EQUIPMENT ESTABLISH-
MENT..." UP TO STRENGTH. HIS AIM: 2 INFANTRY BATTALIONS OF 4
COMPANIES EACH (PLUS THIRD UNCHANGED IN CANADA EARMARKED FOR
NATO); 1 ARMORED REGIMENT OF 3 TANK SQUADRONS; 1 ARTILLERY
REGIMENT WITH 3 BATTERIES OF 8 GUNS EACH; 1 COMBAT ENGINEER
SQUADRON WITH THREE FIELD TROOPS.

9. PEACEKEEPING: GENERAL DEXTRAZE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE PEACE-
KEEPING FORCES ARE SERVING WITH DISTINCTION, "IT SHOULD ALSO BE
RECOGNIZED THAT MAINTAINING OUR UN COMMITMENTS CREATES A CON-
SIDERABLE STRAIN ON OUR PERSONNEL RESOURCES...WE HOPE TO HAVE
RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE NEAR FUTURE...ON HOW TO HANDLE PROBLEM."

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10 GENERAL DEXTRAZE CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS BY REFERRING TO
THE CANADIAN RESERVES AND HIS "AIM TO INTEGRATE OUR RESERVISTS
AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITH OUR REGULAR FORCES.

11. COMMENT: WHILE GENERAL DEXTRAZE OBVIOUSLY ATTEMPTING TO
PUT BEST LIGHT ON STATUS OF CANDIAN DEFENSE FORCES, IT IS ALSO
OBVIOUS THAT CANADIAN DEFENSE POSTURE REMAINS RELATIVELY
PRECARIOUS. SOUTHAM COLUMNIST, CHARLES LYNCH, PERHAPS BEST
SUMMARIZED SKEPTICISM IN JANUARY 17 COLUMN ENTITLED, "FORCES
REALLY THIN". AFTER POINTING OUT THAT "DEFENSE, LIKE POLITICS,
IS THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE" HE SAYS, "THE TROUBLE IS IT DOESN'T
RESULT IN A CREADIBLE DEFENSE POSTURE BECAUSE IT DOES NOT TAKE
INTO ACCOUNT WHAT A POTENTIAL ENEMY MAY BE DOING". HE POINTS
OUT THE RAPIDLTY EXPANDING MILITARY BUDGET OF THE SOVIET UNION
AND CONCLUDES THAT CANADA'S DEFENSE POSTURE CANNOT BE "CREDIBLE

TO THE SOVIETS". LYNCH CONCLUDES THAT "DEXTRAZE KNOWS THAT HIS FORCES ARE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT.....IN THE MIDST OF THIS MAGIC ACT IN WHICH HE IS COMPELLED TO FOOL HIMSELF AND EVERY-BODY ELSE - EXCEPTING OUR ALLIES AND THE SOVIETS - HE HAS THROWN AT HIM THE JOB FOR PROVIDING SECURITY FORCES FOR THE MONTREAL OLYMPICS....DEXTRAZE.....IS TELLING US THAT HE CANNOT AFFORD TO EXERCISE HIS TROOPS ADEQUATELY NOR CAN HE ARM AND FUEL THEIR WEAPONS AND MACHINES."

12. FULL TEST BEING POUCHED EUR/CAN.
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